
Benson and Kirkpatrick

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *The American Socialist* [Chicago], v. 2, no. 40, whole no. 180 (April 15, 1916), pg. 1.

These are our candidates; the candidates of the Socialist Party for President and Vice President of the United States.

We feel proud of Benson and Kirkpatrick and with good reason, for they not only incarnate the principles of socialism but they are men of unimpeachable character and standing. They have both stood for years in the white light of publicity and not the bitterest enemy of their cause has dared to question their motive or assail their integrity.

Allan Benson and George Kirkpatrick are true socialists, real leaders, actual MEN! Both were born in poverty, reared in the humble surroundings of the working class, and both spent their boyhood and the earlier years of their manhood in the bitter struggle for existence.

The Socialist candidates for President and Vice President know by actual experience the meaning of capitalism to its exploited victims, and when they speak and write to the oppressed and suffering it is out of their very hearts and souls, and this is why their words are tipped with fire and their messages ring true and strike responsive chords in the breasts of the people.

Both these banner-bearers of the Socialist Party have won the confidence and love of their comrades as the intrepid champions of the toiling millions, the true leaders of the common people, the brave apostles of the social revolution. Not once has either ever flinched or faltered; cowered or compromised. In every hour of trial they have stood erect, true to their manhood, loyal to their convictions, staunch in their devotion to the cause, ever ready to strike a blow or repel one, and ever waging the warfare for the overthrow of capitalism and the emancipation of the people.

Benson and Kirkpatrick have endeared themselves to the oppressed and poverty-stricken by espousing their cause and fighting their battles with the zeal of crusaders and the strength of giants. Gifted as they undoubtedly are, with rare ability, with keen insight, and with exceptional powers of expression of both pen and tongue, they could have made traffic of their talents as most men do, and long since have attained positions of prominence and wealth in the world of capitalism; but fortunately Benson and Kirkpatrick were not born to intellectual prostitution, but instead preserved "the spotless whiteness of their souls," spurned with contempt the emoluments and honors, so-called, which apostates reap, and with a fidelity and devotion which has grown stronger with the years, they have proved themselves fit and qualified to represent the masses, speak for the people, and be the standard-bearers of their party in the struggle to destroy capitalism, abolish slavery, put an end to war, and bring freedom and happiness back to a distracted world.

The capitalist parties stand alike for the system that breeds poverty and famine, pestilence and war, insanity and death for the masses of mankind. The Socialist Party represented by Benson and Kirkpatrick faces these parties squarely upon this monumental issue, denounces them for their hypocrisy and crimes, and appeals to the millions they have robbed and outraged and ruthlessly slaughtered in mines and mills and upon bloody battlefields to rally to the standard of their class, drive their despoilers from power, wipe their savage system from the face of the earth, and inaugurate the reign of peace and freedom and the commonwealth of comrades.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.